

VZCZCXYZ0002
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHOS #0275 1831511
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 021511Z JUL 09
FM AMCONSUL LAGOS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0838
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0430
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS LAGOS 000275

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [EMIN](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: EBONYI STATE BENEFITS FROM USG RICE AND
HEALTH PROJECTS

11. (SBU) Summary: On June 18, the Ambassador traveled to Ebonyi state to meet the governor and visit a USAID funded vesicovaginal fistula (VVF) clinic. The Ambassador and Governor Martin Elechi spoke about developing the rice industry and the importance of private sector investment in agricultural development. The Ambassador encouraged the Governor to continue to work with USAID projects under its MARKETS program to improve the quality of rice production. Governor Elechi requested assistance to secure a private sector partner that could evaluate Ebonyi,s potential for solid mineral extraction. Security issues for Ebony and the Southeast region covered Septel. End Summary.

Focus on Agriculture and Solid Minerals

12. (SBU) On June 18, the Ambassador traveled to Ebonyi state to meet with Governor Martin Elechi (PDP - Peoples' Democratic Party). The Governor stressed the importance of the rice industry and his focus on large-scale rice production for the state,s economy. He noted, however, that existing agricultural facilities lacked the technology they needed to produce higher-grade rice. The Ambassador told the Governor about the current USG food security program for Nigeria under which the USAID Maximizing Agricultural Revenue and Key Enterprises in Target Sites (MARKETS) project working in rice cultivation which will optimize the existing large-scale rice production facility. She highlighted how this project has already trained over 3,000 farmers and provided agricultural credit to over eighty farmers to help with agro-processing. The Governor expressed interest in meeting with the MARKETS staff to continue dialogue on strengthening Ebonyi,s rice industry. The Ambassador underscored the importance of building partnerships between agriculture and the private sector. Governor Elechi was eager for his commissioners to meet with the U.S. Commercial and the Foreign Agricultural Services to see how they may assist in connecting with private companies to obtain necessary technical assistance for agricultural development.

13. (SBU) One potential industry for development, Governor Elechi told the Ambassador, is the extraction of solid minerals, including limestone and coal. However, he said that the state has been limited to researching the limestone deposits due to a lack of proper estimates of the grade and quantity of existing deposits of coal and other minerals. He requested the Ambassador,s assistance to find a private sector partner that can conduct an evaluation of the availability of minerals in Ebonyi.

South East Regional VVF Center

14. (SBU) The Ambassador visited the South East Regional Vesicovaginal Fistula (VVF) Center, a USAID-sponsored Access, Quality and Use in Reproductive Health Activity (ACQUIRE) project. The VVF center was started by Mrs. Josephine Elechi, the Governor's wife, as part of her Mother and Childcare Initiative. Since becoming an ACQUIRE project, USAID has provided training for doctors and VVF repair surgeries for 225 women in the past seven months. In appreciation for the U.S. Mission's assistance to the clinic, the traditional rulers of Ebonyi presented the Ambassador with an honorary chieftaincy.

15. (SBU) Comment: Governor Elechi is eager to pursue partnerships with the Mission, particularly in the areas of agricultural development. The rice projects and potential for solid mineral extraction distinguishes Ebonyi as being a ripe state for public-private partnerships. Ebonyi state is open to such opportunities and the Mission is already pursuing opportunities for collaboration. End Comment.

16. (U) This cable has been coordinated with Embassy Abuja.
BLAIR